

A Consideration of the Damnatory Clauses in the Athanasian Creed; and the several Senses they are taken in. K 10/45

Humbly offer'd to the Judgment of our Superiours.

CHAP. I.

The several Interpretations of the Damnatory Clauses.

THE Damnatory Clauses are; *Who-
soever will be saved, before all
things it is necessary that he hold
the Catholick Faith: Which Faith,
except every one do keep whole and undefiled,
without doubt he shall perish everlastingly:
And the Catholick Faith is this, &c. He
therefore that will be saved, must thus think,
&c. Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting
Salvation, &c.*

In these Clauses Damnation is denounc'd
against them that do not believe the *Trinity*
and *Incarnation*. Yet this Sentence seems to
admit of some Generality, and it is variously
interpreted by several Persons. For,

I. Some hold that it concerns those only,
who do not believe certain plain and incon-
testable Truths, which may be understood
by the Doctrines of the *Trinity* and *Incar-
nation*, and which are most evidently agree-
able to the natural Notion of the *Unity* of
God.

II. Others take this Denunciation of Dam-
nation as intended against those, who do
not believe three *Minds* or spiritual Beings
in the *Deity*, and the *Incarnation* of one
of these *Minds* or *Spirits*, in the grossest

manner that can be conceived.

III. Some, without fixing or declaring
their own Notions and Explications of these
Doctrines, content themselves to say in ge-
neral, that by the Damnatory Clauses Dam-
nation is denounc'd against those who do
not believe the *Truth* concerning the *Trinity*
and *Incarnation*.

IV. Others only put in this proviso, that
the belief (in general) of these Doctrines is
necessary to Salvation, when they are pro-
pounded in a way of Credibility.

V. Some take the said Clauses to import
the Damnation of those who do not be-
lieve, that the *Terms* or *Expressions* conse-
crated in this Creed are *Essential* to the
Christian Religion, and that the use of them
is absolutely necessary to Salvation; and yet
they hold at the same time that the said Ex-
pressions and Terms are in a great degree
unintelligible, and that no determinate sense
ought to be assign'd to them.

VI. Others in fine esteem (with the last-
mention'd) that those are hereby declar'd
Damned who do not believe, that the *Terms*
or *Expressions* consecrated in this Creed are
necessary to the *Union* of Christians; but
then

then on the other hand, they assert that every particular Christian has *Liberty* to explain them, and may take them in that sense which he thinks best.

If we make due Reflections on these several Interpretations, we shall be able to judg rightly of the *Damnatory Clauses* contain'd in the *Athanasian Creed*. And it is without doubt of great Importance to us, to

inquire carefully into this Matter. For certainly, to pronounce *Damnation* without knowing *why* or *wherefore*, is a great Profanation, and a jesting with Religion: And to *Damn* any Man, without plainly seeing and having well consider'd whether there be warrantable Grounds for it, is a breach of *Charity* in it self most damnable.

CHAP. II.

The Consideration of the First Interpretation of the Damnatory Clauses.

I. **T**HE first Interpretation we mention'd, is that of those who by the *Damnatory Clauses* denounce *Damnation* against them only, who deny those plain and incontestable Truths, which may be understood by the Doctrines of the *Trinity* and *Incarnation*, and which are most evidently agreeable to the natural Notion of the *Unity of God*.

To conceive their meaning, and to be able to make some Considerations thereupon, we must know, First, what are those plain and incontestable Truths, against the denial of which they pronounce *Damnation*.

Secondly, What Reasons they alledg why by the Doctrines of the *Trinity* and *Incarnation* they understand the said plain and incontestable Truths, and consequently why they think they may apply the *Damnatory Clauses* as they do, or take them in that sense in which they take them.

First, What are those plain and incontestable Truths, against the denial and unbelief of which they pronounce *Damnation*. They are these: ' That God is an infinite Mind; ' that by his natural Act of Understanding, ' God eternally possesses in himself an infinite Wisdom; that God being infinitely ' Wise, findeth the way to do whatsoever ' he pleases, and is naturally inclin'd to exercise his Almighty Power, to express the ' Pleasure He takes in the excellency of his Nature: And in fine, that God in an extraordinary manner manifests his Wisdom ' in and by our Saviour, and to that end ' Unites himself to him as closely as it is

' possible for the Divine Nature to be united ' to the Humane; and so dwelleth in him, ' or acteth most extraordinarily in and by ' him; and for the same end as aforesaid ' (for the eternal Manifestation of his Goodness and Justice) capacitates and enables ' him to rule and govern the whole World.

These are the Truths, against the denial and unbelief of which they pronounce *Damnation*. We are to know,

Secondly, What are the Reasons why by the Doctrines of the *Trinity* and *Incarnation* they understand the said plain and incontestable Truths, and consequently why they think they may apply the *Damnatory Clauses* as they do, or take them in that sense in which they take them. The Reasons that may be alledg'd for this, are these following.

(1.) Because the denial of these Truths is certainly damnable.

(2.) Because the Orthodox Expressions may be taken in a sense implying these Truths.

(1.) Because the denial of these Truths is certainly damnable. It implies a very great Wickedness to deny Truths which are evidently Credible, and which are concerning matters of the greatest moment, and without the belief of which Religion cannot subsist. And of this nature are the Truths here spoken of. If God be not a most Perfect Being, All-Wise and All-Powerful, he cannot be the Object of our Worship. And if God does not constantly Concur with Jesus Christ, in a most extraordinary manner, in the Work of Mens Salvation, and does not

not constantly *assist* him with his Divine *Wisdom*, Christianity cannot be true, Christ cannot be thought to over-rule all things and govern the Universe for the good of his Church, the New Covenant ratify'd by his Blood must fall to the Ground, and the Holy Scripture must be look'd upon as a forg'd Story. Now the Proofs of both natural and reveal'd Religion are so clear and solid, that the Gospel cannot be hid but to those whose Eyes the Devil has blinded, thro' their own Malice and wilful Inconsideration: And these are undeniably matters of so great Importance, that *wilfully* to reject and *rashly* to deny them, (as the Case is here suppos'd) argues a high *Presumption* and a *damnable* Disposition. No Man can disbelieve the Essential Truths or the Fundamentals of *Natural* Religion, and be *Innocent*. And none can *without guilt* reject the things intelligibly and expressly deliver'd in the *Gospel*, when the Proofs and Evidences thereof are offer'd to be consider'd. The denial therefore of these incontestable Notions of the *Trinity* and *Incarnation*, may justly be thus *Anathematiz'd*: that is to say, those may be declar'd to be in an *evil* Condition and in a *damnable* State, who reject these Truths, which cannot be disbelieved by any who are virtuous, sincere and inquisitive. The other *Reason*, why by the Doctrines of the *Trinity* and *Incarnation* these plain and incontestable Truths are understood, and why the *Damnatory* Clauses are consequently taken in the sense we have shewn, is,

(2.) *Because the Orthodox or Athanasian Terms may be applied to, or used in speaking of and expressing, the aforesaid (certain and incontestable) Truths.* Which is evinced by the following Arguments.

First, In themselves the *Orthodox Expressions* are in some manner susceptible of this sense, which implies the said Truths.

Secondly, These Expressions and Terms are taken in this sense, by most of the *Orthodox*.

Thirdly, Every Man's *Right* of discerning and judging for himself, *Authorizes* him to take the *Orthodox Terms* in that sense, which appears to him to be the most *rational*

and *credible*, when he inquires into the matter the best he can; therefore he may undoubtedly take them in this sense, if this sense appears then to him to be the most *Credible* and the most *Rational*.

First, In themselves the *Orthodox Expressions* are in some manner susceptible of this sense, which implies the said Truths. It is not only certain, that God is an Intelligence or *Mind* and *Spiritual* Being, that this excellent Spirit and Divine Mind reflects in a most excellent manner, (God's Reflections and Cogitations being undoubtedly infinitely *Wise*) and that He *delights* in, and approves and loves to act agreeably to his own most perfect Thoughts; but it is likewise evident, that God's *Intellect* is the Cause and as it were the *Father* of his Divine and *Reflex Wisdom*; and that the Divine *Volition* or self-Complacence is the eternal Spiration of God, and is the product both of the Divine Wisdom and of the Divine Intellect, whereof the Divine Wisdom is the Offspring.

God therefore particularly consider'd as a Divine Mind or Intellect, may be called God the *Father*, and may be said to *beget*. God particularly consider'd together with this Property of Divine Wisdom, may be call'd God the *Son*, and may be said to be *begotten*. And God particularly consider'd with the Property of Divine Love, may be call'd God the *Holy Ghost* or Holy Spirit, and may be said to *proceed* (*Spirit*, because eminently denoting *Power*; and *Holy*, because proceeding from and conducted by both *Understanding*, and Goodness or *Wisdom*.)

Now the Divine *Wisdom* constantly dwelling in our Lord Jesus Christ in as close a manner as possible, to capacitate him for the Government of the Universe, and by his Office and Administration to manifest most illustriously the Divine Goodness and Justice, (that is to say, the Divine *Wisdom*) God the *Son* may therefore be said to be *Incarnate*, and to make one Person with the Man Jesus Christ.

To the Objection, that after all it cannot be denied but that these Expressions are somewhat *improper*; it is answer'd, that this is not denied, and that it is only assert-

ed that the said Expressions, upon the account of certain Resemblances and Analogies, may be applied, tho but *improperly*, to the afore-mentioned (incontestable) Truths.

If it be further objected, that it seems to be a *Will-Worship* and a kind of *Idolatry*, notwithstanding the said Union or Incarnation, to call the *Man* Jesus Christ *God*, or to *worship* God in the *Man* Jesus Christ, seeing God actually dwelleth and is, manifests himself and acteth, in all things, and yet all things are not to be called *God*, neither is God to be worshipped in all things: In answer to this it is to be considered, that God's Union with Christ is very extraordinary, and that God dwelleth in Christ, and manifests himself and acteth in and by him, in a very extraordinary manner.

We know that God is in all things, or that all things are in God: and if God were no otherwise in Jesus Christ than in all other Creatures, God indeed were not to be worshipped in him; neither would the Holy Scripture have told us, that in him the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily, (Col. 2. 9.) that is to say, that in him, so far as the Humanity is capable to receive, and so far as is expedient and necessary for the end and design of the Christian Dispensation, are concentrated all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, (Col. 2. 3.) To the intent that now unto the Principalities and Powers in heavenly places, might be known by his Administration of the Church the manifold Wisdom, Goodness and Justice of God, (Ephes. 3. 10.) that God hath set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, (Ephes. 1. 20.) and hath put all things under his feet, (Ephes. 1. 22.) and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father of all.

In these and the like Passages of Scripture it is evident, that God is in Christ more eminently than in any other Creature, that God ordereth every Knee to bow to Jesus, and that we are taught to direct this honouring of Christ to the glory of God; which is what is meant by *worshipping God in Christ*, which,

by these Texts, appears to be no *Will-Worship*, but a warranted Service, and consequently no *Idolatry*.

It would be *Idolatry* or a *Will-Worship*, if we bowed down to those things, before which God hath not commanded or warranted us to bow the Knee; or if we worship'd God in any other Creature, than that which not only God has set at his own right Hand and exalted above every Name, but which he has enjoin'd every Knee to bow to, to the Glory of God.

But in worshipping the Godhead in Christ, we worship God where he has told us he is willing to be honour'd and glorify'd, as in the Place where his Glorious Majesty in the Administration of the World is peculiarly manifested and to be attended unto. This is the excellent and illustrious *Schechina* of God's own appointment, or the Divine Symbol of God's Presence, where God is worship'd, (see the Quotation out of St. Athanasius his 3d Oration against the Arians, in Dr. Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, Chap. 4th.) whereof the Ark or Temple of Jerusalem was the Type.

The Temple of Jerusalem was appointed as the Symbol of God's Presence to the Jews, where his Majesty in the Administration of the Government of the particular Jewish Nation was manifested, and to be attended unto. Accordingly they worship'd towards the Temple, that is to say, They worship'd God in the Temple, even when they were never so far from Jerusalem, as appears, Dan. 6. 10. And can any think it to be *Idolatry*, to worship God in Christ, in whom it hath pleas'd God that the fulness of the Godhead should dwell, and to whom God has given a Name, which is above every Name, that to or before and towards Jesus every Knee should bow, to the Glory of God?

It is God himself, and not the Creature, which we worship in our Saviour's Person, saith St. Athanasius, in the fore-mention'd Oration. That is to say, when we bow to Jesus, we do it at God's Command, and to the Glory of God, who dwelleth in Jesus, and manifests his Goodness and Justice by him, whom he enables to govern the Universe,
and

nd by whose Me liation he receives Mens Addreffes, and in whom he appears gracious and reconcil'd to all them that repent and obey the Gofpel.

Neither in the Temple, nor in the Prophets, nor in any other Creature did God fo dwell, and manifelt himfelf. No other Creature and no other Man has God exalted to his right Hand, above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and enabled to govern the Univerfe, and to fave all Men to the uttermoft that come unto God by him, (*Hebr. 7. 25.*) There neither is, nor ever was any other Name given, whereby Men fhould be fave'd, (*Act. 4. 12.*) Chrift is the only Saviour of the World, thro whose Blood God admits Sinners to Repentance, thro whom God adminifters Judgment and Mercy, with whom God concurs in the Univerfal Redemption of Mankind, whom God constantly dwells in, and manifelts himfelf, and fhall forever manifelt his Juftice and Goodnefs by, and whom God constantly illuminates and auates, condufts and affifts with his *Wifdom* without meafure, even as much as is neceffary, and Human Nature can receive.

This is what the *Incarnation* implies. And in this fenfe we call Chrift God. Not as if we fhould fay, That the Humanity of our Saviour has ceas'd to be fuch (or is no longer a Creature confifting of a reasonable Soul and a glorious Body) and is become God himfelf, or is tranfubftantiated into the Deity (which were impoffible.) But we mean, that the Godhead dwelleth, as has been faid, and manifelts his Majefty in Chrift, appearing in him as ready to receive true Penitents into favour, and capacitating him to govern the whole Univerfe, to be the Mediator of all them that come to God thro him, and to be the Saviour of the World: And for infinitely lefs reafon than this, the Ark, (*Pfal. 47. 5. and 68. 24.*) and the Angel of the Lord, that appeared to Mofes in the Buth, (*Exod. 3. 4.*) are called God.

This Senfe the Orthodox Expreflion is fufceptible of, when we fay that the fecond Perfon of the Trinity has affumed the human Nature of Chrift Jefus. And indeed it can-

not with any confiftency be otherwife underftood, when it is owned that God is but one Mind or Spiritual Being, that the Trinity is God confidered as unoriginated Intellect, reflex Wifdom, and infinite Power; and that it is only the fecond Perfon, or the divine Wifdom, that is incarnate. For how can the Divine Wifdom be incarnate, but by constantly dwelling and manifeltng it felf in the Human Nature, which it illuminates and auates, directts and condufts in Affairs furlpaffing the Capacity of a mere Creature and finite Being? Thus as the Soul and Body make one Man, fo God (by the concurrence, and the constant and extraordinary indwelling and illumination or manifeltation of his Wifdom, fo far as is requifite for the ends of the Chriftian Oeconomy) and the Man Chrift Jefus make one Perfon. Not that the Perfections or Properties of the Divine Nature are really communicated to the Human Nature thus exalted or dignified and affifted as aforefaid; nor doth the Deity hereby become Partaker of the Imperfections of the Humane Nature. The *Incarnation* imports not that God became paffible, or could fuffer Pain and Mifery; nor that the Man Chrift Jefus is infinite, omnifcient, omnipotent, fupremely, adorable, &c. (See Mr. Nye's *Inftitutions*, p. 77.) But God and the Man Jefus Chrift are one Perfon, as they eminently concur together in the redeeming of Mankind and governing the whole Univerfe; as the Soul and Body (for inftance) concur in producing the fame Acts; as feveral Men by Commiffion, make one Admiral; as Husband and Wife are one Flefh; and as all the Members of Parliament are one Body.

The Term, *Perfon*, here is taken in no other than its original fignification, denoting a Mode or Manner of being or aiting; only here it is external. Whereas a *Perfon* in the Holy Trinity, ' is one of its three effential Proper-
' ties or Modes of exifting or aiting, in him-
' felf, as fuch a Mode is confidered together
' with the Divine Effence, Godhead, or
' God. Each Divine *Perfon* then is not
fubfifting only, but effentially and neceffarily
as well as really exifting; and thus is intelli-
gent, eternal, uncreated, and poffeffed of
all.

all other Divine Attributes. And of all this the Orthodox Terms and System cannot be denied to be susceptible.

[Note, in the Pamphlet intitled, *A Resolution of the Objections against the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity*, &c. P. 11. Col. 1. Lin. 14. speaking of the Notion and Characters of the three Divine Persons, after these Words, (taken out of Mr. Nye) *not subsisting only, but, the following should have been put in, but were omitted thro inadvertency, essentially and necessarily as well as*: which omission destroys the sense, as it *subsisting* differed from *really existing*; whereas adding the said Words, and reading that each Divine Person is *living, and not subsisting only, but essentially and necessarily as well as really existing*, the reasoning is compleat; the meaning being, that the Persons of the Holy Trinity subsist not in the Divine Nature, *as Accidents* in their Subject, but are so *essential* to the Deity that without them God would not be God.]

By what has been said then it appears, that three *Distinctions* may be considered in God, (the Divine *Intellect* being really distinct from its two essential Acts or Properties, *reflex Wisdom*, and *Love or Will*) that God considered under these Distinctions may be said to be three *Persons*; and that the Divine *Wisdom*, manifesting it self and dwelling in, and constantly illuminating, conducting and actuating the *Man* Christ, may thus also be said to be *incarnate*, (that Term being taken in a manner both worthy of God, and agreeable to the Nature of a Creature.)

It is then in a good measure evident, that the *Man* Jesus Christ may be said to be *God* in this sense, *viz.* with respect to the constantly *inhabiting Divinity*, as well as to the high Dignity of *representing* and *acting in the stead of God* at the Helm of the Universe. But it may not seem perhaps altogether so plain, whether our Saviour, as *Man*, is to be invoc'd, and whether these Prayers, *O Son of David have Mercy upon us*, and *O Christ hear us*, be lawful and proper. Yet these Prayers and Invocations should seem to be warranted, by St. Stephen's Address to our Saviour, on the right Hand of God, in the

Heavens, (*Act. 7. 59.*) Indeed 'tis reply'd, that this is a particular case, (which doth not imply that our Lord Jesus Christ, as he is a *Man* and a finite Creature, sees every where, and hears at the same time the Prayers of the whole Multitude of Believers) that it is observ'd St. Stephen saw the Lord Jesus; that the Lord Jesus therefore, no doubt, might also see and hear St. Stephen; and that the import of St. Stephen's Request only was, that our Saviour would be pleas'd to wait for the coming of his Spirit just ready to fly out of his martyr'd Body, and that the holy Angels might conduct his departing Soul into the Hands of his beheld and belov'd Redeemer. Howbeit, Our Lord Jesus Christ being the *Mediator* of Men, it is credible that he may be address'd unto *as such*; and it cannot be doubted but that God assists him so far as is necessary to enable him to save to the uttermost all those that come to God thro him. This is imply'd in the (*Hypostatical*) Union of the *Second Person* of the Trinity with the *Man* Jesus. So that it seems that what the Papiists do without any ground conceit concerning their many Mediators and departed Saints, may truly be said of our Saviour, that he sees all our Needs in the *Glass* of the Deity: for, no doubt, the Divine *Wisdom* (by which God knows himself) knows all things also; and, illuminating the *Man* Jesus Christ so far as is necessary to capacitate him for the discharge of his Office of *Mediator*, this Divine *Wisdom* acquaints him with the Affairs of the Church, and lets him know the particular Requests of its Members. However, it is to be observ'd, the Orthodox, when they pray to *Christ*, address their Supplications to our Saviour as to a Person that is both *God* and *Man*; and it is on the *Godhead* the Prayers are design'd to terminate, tho our Saviour be invoc'd by the Appellations that are peculiar to the *Manhood*. As a Person that is both *Soul* and *Body*, may be address'd unto by Appellations peculiar to the *Body*, as when call'd *White* or *Black*; and yet 'tis certain the Address terminates on the Nature which is *spiritual*, for that alone is capable of being address'd unto, and the Person hears and

and understands as he is a *Spirit*, and not as he is *Body* or *Matter*. Thus the Orthodox declare, that when they invoke the *Son of David*, it is the *Godhead* they adore, which manifests it self and dwelleth in the *Son of David*. As saith *St. Athanasius* in the *Oration* afore-mention'd, *It is not the Man we worship, but we worship God in him*. The *Man Jesus Christ* is only to be honour'd, as being exalted to the highest *Glory and Dignity* that a *Creature* is capable of. *God alone* is to be ador'd with *divine Worship*.

Whether or no, indeed, notwithstanding the *Incarnation* or *Hypostatical Union*, (rationally understood, or taken in a sense consistent with this Belief, that there is but one *God*, or one *Divine Being*, *Mind* or *Spirit*; that the *Persons* of the *Trinity* are the *Divine Nature* consider'd with its *essential Properties*, *Intellect*, *Wisdom*, *Power*; and that the *Second Person* only is *incarnate*) it be very proper to invoke *God* by the Appellations peculiar to the *Human Nature* of our *Saviour*, is a thing apart; (for the Comparison of the Union of *Soul* and *Body*, with the Union of the *Second Person* of the *Trinity* and the *Man Jesus Christ*, is only design'd as an *Elucidation* in some part or respect, as *Comparisons* generally are, which use not to run upon four Legs; and those that would rigidly press the said Comparison are evidently out, for 'tis certain the *Godhead* doth not partake of the Affections of the *Manhood*, as the *Soul* suffers when the *Body* suffers;) however, the impropriety of Terms is in a great measure satisfy'd for, when the said Terms are sufficiently explain'd, which seems here to be done; it being declar'd, as we have seen, that it is not the *Man*, but *God in him*, that is ador'd, under whatsoever Appellation.

If there appear any further Difficulties to the Reader concerning these Matters, he may be refer'd to the above mention'd Pamphlet, intitul'd, *A Resolution of the Objections against the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity*, &c. or to another, intitul'd, *The State of the Controversy, concerning the Doctrines of the Holy Trinity and Incarnation*; both which may be read in two Hours time. The fol-

lowing Difficulties, in particular, are propos'd and resolv'd in the former, (P. 12, and 13.) Whether the *Divine Wisdom* being produc'd by the *Divine Intellect*, and the *Divine Will* proceeding from them both; the *Intellect* must not then be suppos'd to be before either of them? Whether, each of the (essential) *Divine Properties*, distinct from the other two, being to give the Denomination of a *Person* in the *Divine Essence*; each of the *Persons* be not imperfect, wanting something essential to the *Divine Nature*, and be not therefore improperly call'd *God*; or how, if it be said that *God* is *incarnate*, it doth not follow that the *three Divine Persons* are *incarnate*? The Resolution of this Difficulty is a clear Demonstration of the Truth of this Orthodox Assertion, which seemeth contradictory: 'That each of the *Divine Persons*, tho really distinct from the other two, has the whole *Divine Essence* or *Substance*; that is to say, all the essential Attributes, Properties, and Perfections. is perfect *God*, and not more or less than the whole *Trinity*; all the three *Persons* are not greater than any of them is; each of them is so perfect, that nothing can be added thereto.

This is the first Argument, shewing that the Orthodox Terms may be taken in this sense, which implies these (afore said) certain and incontestable Truths; *Because, in themselves, the Orthodox Expressions are in some manner susceptible of this sense*. Now,

Secondly, The second Argument evincing this, is, *That the said Terms are taken in this sense by the generality of the Orthodox*. As for the Doctrine of the *Incarnation*, we have shewn it cannot be taken in another sense, when it is held that there is but one *God*, or one *Divine Being*; that the *Persons* of the *Trinity* are the *Divine Nature* consider'd with or under its *essential Properties*, and that the *second Person* only is *incarnate*. That the *second Person* only is *incarnate*, is generally granted; and therefore all the Expressions of the Orthodox must be taken in a sense consistent hereunto. And that the Generality of the Orthodox hold only one *Divine Being*, and take the *Persons* of the Trinity

Trinity to be the Divine Nature consider'd as distinguish'd by its *essential Properties*, is also notorious to them that inquire into the Matter.

When Christians began to philosophize about the Doctrine of the H. Trinity, about 140 Years after our Saviour, (the Platonick Philosophy being much in vogue) *Justin Martyr* explain'd it thus; *There is one (Divine) Essence, and there are three Modes of existing.*

J. Damascen saith likewise, *In the Holy Trinity, a Person is an eternal Mode or Manner of existing.*

In the *Programma* of the Emperor *Justin*, to which all the Churches gave their assent, it is said; *We adore the Trinity in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity: an Unity as to Essence; a Trinity, as to Properties or Persons.*

The sum of the fifteen Books which *St. Austin* has written concerning the Trinity, is this; *Mind, Wisdom, Love, are the three Persons of the Holy Trinity: the blessed Trinity is God, consider'd as original Wisdom; and as knowing, and willing himself.*

He saith, *Mind, and its Love to it self, are two; so are Mind, and its Knowledge of it self. But Mind, its Knowledge, and Love, are (manifestly) so three; as that also at the same time they are but one. Mind knowing it self, is the Parent of such Knowledge, &c.*

Leo Romanus saith, *There is one Essence, and a Trinity of Properties or Persons.*

Gutmundus, Archiepiscop. Aversan. 'God begat his *Wisdom*, by whom are all things, of himself. What should God make of this *Wisdom*, if he did not love it? Love is the Spirit, which so proceeds from both Father and Son as to remain in both.

Gulielmus Episcop. Parisiens. 'God created all things by the *Word*, that is the Son; and by his *Will*, that is the Spirit.

The Council of Toledo. 'Let *Mind* be put as the Person of the Father; then the *Word* (or *Wisdom*) issuing from Mind, will be understood to be the Son; as by the *Will* proceeding from Mind and *Wisdom*, is meant the Spirit.

Gennadius, Patriarch of Constantinople.

'These three, *Mind, the Wisdom, and the Will*, are one God.

Calvin. 'Tis even natural to conceive, first, the *Divine Mind*; next, his reflex *Wisdom*, then his *Power*: on which account we say the Son is of the Father, and the H. Spirit of both.

The late Bishop of *Meaux*, in his *Universal History*, says: *We have the Image of the Trinity in our Soul, in as much as Thought is the Son of our Understanding, and we love both the Understanding and Thought the Offspring thereof, and delight to act agreeably thereto.* And he cites *Gregory Nazianzen* and *St. Austin*, as saying the same thing. He might have quoted a great many more to the purpose, but that he would not needlessly multiply quotations.

Clemens Alexandrin. 'There is a *Mind* in Man, who is therefore said to be made in the Image of God: Man, on the account of the *Wisdom* in him, is liken'd to the *Divine Logos*.

Gregory Nyssen. 'If thou wilt know God, first know thy self; thou may'st know him by thy own Structure and Make, and by the things within thee. There are three personal Properties, in the one Substance of the Soul; namely that State of the Soul that is *unbegotten*, the Word that is *begotten*, and the Procession of the Spirit.

St. Hilary, of Poitiers. 'As in us, *Wisdom* and *Power* is our own inward Motion and Work; so with the Father, his inward Word and Power cannot be separated from him.

Edmundus, Archiepiscop. Cantuariens. 'By such a way as this, Man cometh to the Knowledge of God, that he is one in Substance, three in Persons; for every Man sees it in himself, &c.

According to this current Notion of the Orthodox, the University of Oxford, in 1695, judg'd the contrary Propositions, (*viz. That there are three infinite distinct Minds in the Trinity; and that the three Persons in the Trinity are three distinct, infinite Spirits*) to be false, impious, and Heretical, contrary to the Doctrine of the Catholic Church, and especially of the Church of England.

Accor-

Accordingly, the Learned and Judicious Bishop *Stillingsfleet* saith; ' When we consider the Divine Essence, there can be no Distinction conceiv'd in it, but by different Modes of subsisting; or, what is the same, Relative Properties in the same Divine Essence. A Person is that which results from the Divine Nature and Subsistence together. We do not say that the Person is only a *Modus*, but that it is the Divine Nature subsisting under such a *Modus*.

To this agree the Reverend Dr. *Gastrel's* Words in expressing that Matter, only they are plainer; ' When we name God the Father, we conceive the Idea of God so far as we are capable of conceiving it, as acting so and so, under such Respects and Relations: And when we name God the Son, we conceive nothing else but the same Idea of God over again under different Relations; and so likewise of the Holy Ghost.

For the most of these Quotations, and for a great many others to the same purpose, the Reader is refer'd to Mr. *Nye's* Book, intitul'd, *Institutions concerning the Holy Trinity*; Sold by *J. Darby* in *Bartholomew-Close*. 1703.

Now seeing so many eminent and much esteem'd Doctors and Prelates among the Orthodox, have so understood and explain'd the Orthodox Terms; it is an Argument, that the explaining and understanding thus the said Terms, is not contrary to what is reputed, among the generality of Divines, to be true Orthodoxy.

Thirdly, The third and last Argument, evincing that the Orthodox Terms may be taken in this sense, which implies the (afore said) certain and incontestable Truths, is, That every Man's Right of discerning and judging for himself, authorises him to take the Orthodox Terms in that sense, which appears to him to be the most rational and credible, when he inquires into the Matter the best he can. None but Papists, who pretend that their Church is infallible, and that all particular Christians (absolutely) must therefore submit implicitly to her Decisions, can deny this to be every Man's Right, and every Man's Duty as well as his Privilege to discern

and judg for himself. For if there be no living Judg of Controversies, having Authority to impose magisterially his Dictates and Determinations upon Men, and all whose Decisions may blindly be receiv'd as infallible; then every Man must carefully and diligently use the means of Information, and sincerely and in the fear of God do the best he can, to discern the Truth for himself, and to satisfy his own Conscience: And when a Man has us'd the best means he can to inform himself aright, and is persuaded he has certainly attain'd to the knowledge of the Truth by clear and solid Evidences, he ought to impart his Light and his Discoveries to other Men, and endeavour to persuade them by his Reasons; but he must not pretend to obtrude magisterially his Opinions upon Men, seeing that (after all) he is not infallible, and that (after all) other Men have as much Right, and are as much oblig'd to judg for themselves, as he to judg for himself. This is so firmly and so plainly interwoven in the Principles of Protestants, that it is superfluous to prove it to them. Howbeit, if the Protestant Reader need any farther satisfaction about this Matter, I refer him to the *Irenicum Magnum*, wherein the Gospel-Terms of Communion are stated, or to the Sheet, intitul'd, *Of Subscriptions to Articles of Communion*.

As for the Church of Rome, when we shall see that she can prove her Infallibility, we will very blindly believe whatsoever she pleases. But in the mean time Men may with good reason judg that they justifiably may (and in good reason ought to) take things in the best sense they can. And for ought an usurping, tyrannical and schismatical Church can shew to the contrary, it will remain evident, That every Man has Right to discern and judg for himself; that, that Right authorizes him to take the Orthodox Terms in that sense, which appears to him to be the most rational and credible, when he inquires into the Matter the best he can; and that undoubtedly, therefore, he may take them in the afore said sense, (which implies certain and incontestable Truths) if this sense appear then to him to be the most rational and the most credible.

The Consequences of the Modalists System.

NOW we have taken a view of these two things, which were propos'd to be inquir'd into. First, We have seen, *What are those plain and incontestable Truths, against the denial and unbelief of which those pronounce Damnation, who take the Damnatory Clauses in the Athanasian Creed as denouncing Damnation against them only who deny certain plain and incontestable Truths, which may be understood by the Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation, and which are agreeable to the Belief of the Unity of God.* Secondly, We have seen, *What Reasons they alledg, why by the Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation they understand the said plain and incontestable Truths, and consequently why they judg they may apply the Damnatory Clauses as they do, or take them in that sense in which they take them.* We may now bend our thoughts on what has been said, and see what *Observations* may be made upon the whole. Reflecting attentively thereupon, it seems that the following *Considerations* do naturally present themselves.

In general, the Result of the foregoing Notions is, not only that the *difference* between the *Orthodox* and those that are call'd *Unitarians* is only *verbal* or about *Terms* and *Expressions*, but also that these *Terms* and *Expressions*, which divide the *Unitarians* from the *Trinitarians*, ought not to be impos'd as a Condition of Church-Communion: And that, for these Reasons.

(1.) The *Trinitarian Terms* and *Expressions*, which cause the Separation of the *Unitarians*, are not *scriptural*, and cannot be thought absolutely *necessary*.

(2.) They are very improper, and do intangle and obscure, rather than illustrate, the *Doctrines* that are intended and expressed thereby.

(3.) They occasion many *needless* and *unedifying* Speculations.

(4.) They are the Cause of much (unreasonable) *Heat*, and (unchristian) *Uncharitableness*.

(5.) They cause *Heathens*, *Jews*, *Turks*, and many *Christians* to think, that *Christians* believe and are taught to believe *three Gods*.

(6.) They are a *Stone of Stumbling*, in the way of those who truly believe the *Gospel* to be a *Divine Revelation*; and they are an *Occasion of Separation*.

(7.) A better *Provision* would be made for the *Truth*, (and incontestably every *Man's* *Right* of discerning and judging for himself would be better secur'd) by the *disuse* of the said *Terms* and *Expressions*, than by their being impos'd.

In general, the Result of the fore mention'd Notions, in the first place, is, that the difference between the *Orthodox* and those that are call'd *Unitarians* is only *verbal*, or about *Terms* and *Expressions*. Those Men, who are so much offended with the unscriptural *Expressions* in the *Athanasian Creed*, do not deny these three essential Properties, *Intellect*, *Wisdom*, and *Will*, to be in the *Divine Nature*; and they are call'd *Unitarians*, only because, not thinking that upon the account of the said Properties, God can properly and safely be call'd *three Persons*, &c. they will not use the *Orthodox Terms*, as shall hereafter be further observ'd. They conceive, that, if we speak of God as being *three Divine Persons*, this will give the *Idea* (especially to the vulgar, who are hard of *Comprehension*, and do not consider, and who are much the greater part of *Mankind*) of *three Gods*, (which doth but too often happen, whatever be said to prevent it, many representing to themselves the

three Divine Persons as *three Deities* that are at perfect Unity and Peace among themselves, and that therefore make *as it were* but one God ;) as when we speak of *three Human Persons*, that gives (and that very justly) the Idea of *three Men*. Howbeit, on the other hand, the generality of the *Orthodox* own and profess that they do not mean and intend that *God* is three Persons, as *three Men* are three Persons, but as *the Soul* may be said to be three Persons, or as *one and the same Mind* or Spirit may be considered three several ways, and so may be called three Persons.

In like manner, as touching the Doctrine of the *Incarnation*; the *Unitarians* do not deny that *the Divine Wisdom* in a most extraordinary manner dwells in, illuminates, conducts and assists, and is manifested by our Lord *Jesus Christ*: only they think, that upon that account *God* cannot properly be said to be *Incarnate*, because that Expression seems to import that *God* partakes of the Infirmities and Passions of the *Flesh*, as a *Soul* that is *Incarnate* doth. But the *Trinitarians* declare, that tho they use the term *Incarnate*, yet they do not believe that *God* can suffer or be affected like the *Humane Nature*, as the *Soul* suffers and feels the Affections of the *Body* with which it is *Incarnate*. When they plainly express their Notion concerning that Doctrine, they make it amount to that which we have seen the *Unitarians* do allow of, namely, *That the Divine Wisdom* in a most extraordinary manner dwells in, illuminates, conducts and assists, and is manifested by our Lord *Jesus Christ*. It is then clearly evident that here is no Difference or Controversy about the thing it self, but only about the manner of expressing it, or about the use of certain Words and Terms.

And then, in the next place, the Result of all this in general seems to be, that these Terms and Expressions, which divide the *Unitarians* from the *Trinitarians*, ought not to be imposed as a Condition of Church-Communion.

Tho from all that has been said upon this Subject it do not follow, that when these

Terms are consecrated in the Church, they are not absolutely to be used; yet the foregoing Arguments may imply, that the use of them should not be imposed: For *Governors* may sometimes enact some Laws which they should not enact, and yet which when enacted, the *governed* may for the sake of Order submit to, notwithstanding the incommodioufness and injustice of the said Laws.

If the *Governors* of the Church are not infallible, and if they stick not religiously to the *Gospel Terms of Communion*, they may abuse the Power which they are intrusted with, they may exceed their bounds in their Laws and Prescriptions about *God's* Worship, and about the differences of Opinions, and make too great Encroachments upon *Christian Liberty*; and for this no doubt they shall be answerable to *God*: Howbeit, if their Injunctions do not destroy the essentials of Religion, and are not contrary to *Holiness* and *Vertue*, they may be complied with for Peace sake. If *Governors*, for instance, ordered that nothing should be eaten but *Herbs*, or that nothing should be eaten but *Flesh-Meat*, or that when *Christians* Assembled themselves for the publick Worship of *God* they should all of them wear *Dogs-Skins* or *Bull-Hides* over their Garments; it is not to be doubted that such Arbitrary *Governors* would infallibly be damned, for this horrid Tyranny and this notorious Encroachment upon the Rights and Liberties of *Christians*: Nevertheless, those who were in some measure persuaded, that these tyrannical Impositions do not destroy the Essence of Religious Worship, might and perhaps ought to comply with them, if they found they could be very Pious and Devout, when they condescended to these Human Institutions.

Thus the Arguments, that have been treated of in this Chapter, possibly may not import that the *Orthodox* Terms ought not to be used by those upon whom they are imposed, and in whose Power it is in no wise to take away the use of them; but it seems that these Arguments, and that these

these Notions necessarily imply, that the *Terms and Expressions*, which divide the Unitarians from the Trinitarians, ought not to be imposed as a Condition of Church-Communion; (and consequently, that those shall answer to God for it, that can concur to the taking away the use of them, and that effectually do it not.) For

(1.) *The Trinitarian Terms and Expressions*, which cause the Separation of the Unitarians, are not Scriptural, and cannot be thought absolutely necessary, that is to say, (at least) by those who take them in the sense which has been shewn, and which is now under Consideration. No body indeed denies but that it is agreeable to the tenor of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, that in the Godhead there is a Divine Understanding, a Divine Wisdom, and a Divine Love or Will. But who can pretend, or seriously say that God, considered as distinguished by these Properties, is called three Persons in Scripture; or that the Scripture actually terms God, considered as distinguished by the Property of Understanding, God the Father; considered as distinguished by the Property of Divine Knowledge, God the Son; and considered as distinguished by the Property of Divine Love, God the Holy Ghost? 'Tis true, we read of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; but in those Places there is nothing at all intimating, that thereby we are to understand God as distinguish'd by the Properties of Divine Understanding, Knowledge, and Will.

In the New Testament (will the Unitarians say,) God is stiled *Our Father*, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and our Lord Jesus Christ is called the Son, and the Son of God, as well as the Son of Man, by way of Excellency; and by the Holy Ghost sometimes is meant the Virtue of God, sometimes the Divine Inspiration, and ordinarily it denotes the Chief of the Angels, or else (collectively) it implies not only the Chief, but also the whole Body of Holy Spirits, by whose Ministry God often doth many wonderful Works.

Howbeit, those that take the Trinity of

Persons in the Divine Nature to be God as distinguish'd by the Properties of Understanding, Knowledge, and Love, cannot but own that the Orthodox Terms are not Scriptural, but have been devised, or accommodated to the Orthodox Notions, by Christians, in process of Time; and therefore, they must take them as Ecclesiastical Terms, consecrated to express the Divine Nature: and by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, mention'd in Scripture, they can mean nothing else but what an Unitarian can understand thereby; since it seems, they cannot pretend, that thereby the Scripture designs God as distinguished by the Properties of Understanding, Wisdom, and Love. Indeed they assert, and that very incontestably, that what they understand by the Orthodox Expressions is certainly in Scripture, or that it is agreeable to the tenor of Scripture to believe that there is in God a Divine Understanding, Knowledge, and Will; and that, thus, the Dogm of the Holy Trinity is certainly Scriptural, the thing being agreeable (as was said) to the tenor of Scripture, tho the words that express it be not used in that sense in Scripture; (as was observed,) the Scripture, when it speaks of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, not seeming (for any thing that can be shewn) to distinguish thereby God by the particular Properties of Understanding, reflex Knowledge, and Will. It would then be an ungrounded Conceit, if any imagined that Father, Son, and Spirit, as applied to express the several Properties of Understanding, Knowledge, and Will in God, are Scriptural Terms.

And if Father, Son and Spirit, as denoting God distinguished by Divine Understanding, reflex Wisdom, and Will, be not Scriptural Terms, the Holy Scripture, for any thing that appears, never representing God, as particularly distinguished by either of his Properties, under the Names of God the Father or God the Son or God the Holy Ghost, nor ever calling these three Distinctions (God distinguished by the Property of Divine Understanding, and God distinguished by the Property of reflex Wisdom, and God

distinguished by the Property of Divine Will or Love,) three Persons ; it follows incontestably, that neither therefore can the following Terms be thought Scriptural : Namely, that the second Person of the Trinity was Incarnate, or that God the Son was personally United with the Man Jesus Christ ; thereby only meaning that God, as particularly distinguished by, or particularly considered with his Property of reflex Wisdom, doth constantly and extraordinarily dwell in and illuminate or conduct and assist our Lord Jesus Christ, in the discharge of his Office. For to own that God, particularly distinguished by the Property of reflex Knowledge, is not in Scripture called the Son, or God the Son, or the second Person of the Trinity, and yet to pretend at the same time that it is said in Scripture that God the Son, or the Son, or the second Person is Incarnate ; and that the Scripture thereby positively and expressly declares that God distinguished by the Property of reflex Knowledge, is personally united with Christ ; is an express Contradiction : For it is expressly to say, and unsay the same thing ; for it is (both) to say that the Scripture doth not call God, as particularly distinguished by the Property of reflex Knowledge, the Son or God the Son or the second Person, and to say that the Scripture asserts that God the Son the second Person of the Trinity is Incarnate, and that it is God as particularly distinguished by the Property of reflex Knowledge that is Incarnate. That is as if, having granted that the Scripture no where saith that Melchizedek is Cham, we should at the same time hold that the Scripture asserts that Melchizedek the King of Salem that blessed Abraham is Cham.

It is then most evident and undeniable, that if the Terms, that express the Doctrine of the Trinity, (according to this Notion of it that we are considering) are not Scriptural, (as tis observed they are not ;) neither certainly can those Terms be Scriptural, that express the Doctrine of the Incarnation, agreeably to the said Notion. It is true the Scripture says that the Word was Flesh, and that God was the Word : but (not to insist that no more may be implied by these Places,

but that God, or the saving Knowledge of God's Will, was the Subject of this Message, or that it was God himself who spoke by the Messenger of the Gospel, or who immediately gave him his Commission, and sent him on this great Errand, it being often usual in Scripture to put the Cause for the Effect, and that this most illustrious Messenger was but a frail and mortal Man ; altho God's principal Embassador, endued with the Divine Power of working Miracles, and a God to Mankind in a more eminent manner than Moses was said to be a God to Aaron and to Pharaoh, &c. Exod. 7. 1. Exod. 22. 28. Psal. 45. 6. John 10. 35. howbeit, whatever may be the exact sense of these Passages, it is notorious) it is no where said in Scripture as we have seen, that God as particularly distinguished by the Property of reflex Wisdom was personally United with Jesus Christ, it being not so much as expressed in any place, as was observed, that by the Word or by the Son we are to understand God distinguished by this Property of reflex Knowledge. For it is manifest, that human Conjectures, and remote Consequences, drawn from disputable and far-fetched Arguments, are not to pass for the express Text of Scripture ; for no Man has more Right than another to draw such Consequences, or to make his Comment or Interpretation pass for Scripture. It is therefore plain, that ' nothing can be said to be Scriptural, but ' the very Letter of Scripture, (left in its ' generality) or else what is most express ' therein, and most incontestably obvious to ' all sincere Considerers. Now it would be absurd and altogether groundless to assert, that it is most express (and that it is most incontestably obvious that it is so) in Scripture, that the second Person of the Trinity is personally United (as is here understood, and not only in this sense, but also in these Terms) with the Man Christ Jesus, and that by the Word and by the Son we are necessarily to understand God particularly distinguished by the Property of reflex Knowledge.

Likewise, it cannot certainly be said to be Scriptural, to invoke God under the Appellations

lations peculiar to our Saviour's Human Nature. The Scripture indeed tells us of several Persons, who actually seeing our Lord Jesus Christ, called upon him; and begged of him to grant them certain Favors, which might undoubtedly be asked of him in those Circumstances. It acquaints us moreover, that all things are commanded to obey his Orders.

Howbeit, it no where expresses that *the Man Jesus Christ* is to be invoked, when he is not seen of us; but it directs us to invoke God himself under Appellations peculiarly denoting the Divine Nature, and to ask all we need of him for the sake of his Holy Child Jesus, our Mediator and Intercessor: so that God, inclined graciously to receive such Addresses, acquaints our Advocate with his Will hereupon, and accordingly Orders are given, concerning the Affairs of the Church, to the Holy Angels who are all waiting our Saviour's Commands. Thus the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Christ, and thus the Divine Wisdom illuminates, conducts and assists our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom all Principalities and Powers are subjected. But still, there is neither Example nor Precept, in Scripture, of addressing our Petitions to *the Man Jesus Christ*, when he is not seen of us, but only to God, thro Christ, or in the Name, or for the sake of Christ.

Now it being evident that *the Terms, which cause the Separation of the Unitarians, are not Scriptural*; it is easy to observe, that *the use of the said Terms cannot be thought absolutely necessary.* For surely, to say that any thing which is *not Scriptural* is *absolutely Necessary*, would be very injurious to the Holy Ghost that dictated the Scripture, and that gave it for a perfect Rule to the Christian Church.

And after all, what reason can they possibly assign, who take the Doctrine of the Trinity in the sense that we are now considering, why any *unscriptural Terms* should be held *absolutely Necessary*?

Why should it be *absolutely Necessary* to call God, considered as particularly distinguished by his essential Properties, three

Persons, *God the Father, God the Son, &c.* when the Scripture doth it not? Or why should it not be sufficient to Salvation, to own that there is in God a Divine Understanding, a Divine Wisdom, and a Divine Will; without calling these, or God therewith, by any *unscriptural Names*?

In like manner, taking the Doctrine of the Incarnation in the sense that is agreeable to this Notion of the Trinity; why should any *unscriptural Terms* concerning it be Necessary? If by the Incarnation, or personal Union, be meant that God fully dwells in Christ, that is to say, particularly by his Divine Wisdom, doth extraordinarily and constantly illuminate, conduct and assist him; why can it not be sufficient to say with the Scripture, that *the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in the Man Christ Jesus*? And if in calling upon the Son of David, the intendment be to invoke God who most extraordinarily manifests his Divine Wisdom in and by the Son of David; why should it not be sufficient in our Religious Addresses to express our selves thus, *O God, who doest most extraordinarily manifest thy Divine Wisdom in and by the Son of David, &c.*? this would not at all be contrary to Scripture nor to the *aforesaid Notions* of the Trinity and Incarnation, nor to the Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation in general. It follows therefore, that none of the *unscriptural Terms* relating hereto can be necessary; and consequently, that to insist upon the Use of them as a Condition of Church-Communion, is contrary to the Gospel Terms of Union, on the part of the Imposers.

This has been in a great measure taken notice of, by many Learned Men who are in the greatest Repute among the reformed Churches. St. Austin owns that the word *Persons* applied to the Holy Trinity, is not Scriptural. (*De Trin. l. 5. c. 9.*)

St. Jerom, in a Letter to Pope Damasus, absolutely disapproves the Use of *unscriptural Terms*.

Calvin concludes thus his Dissertation of the Trinity. 'If any are so Nice, that after all they will not allow the word *Persons*; yet they cannot but confess that when

‘ when we say *one*, we mean the *Substance* ;
 ‘ when we say *three*, we intend that in the
 ‘ Divine Essence or Substance there are three
 ‘ *Properties*. Which being sincerely ac-
 ‘ knowledg’d by any, we will not litigate
 ‘ with them. (Instit. Cap. 6. Sect. 25. P.
 179. *Genev.* 1550.)

In another place he saith. ‘ It is fit to
 ‘ forbear such Forms of speaking which are
 ‘ remote from the use of the Holy Scrip-
 ‘ ture.——The word *Trinity* is grounded
 ‘ on no Testimony of God’s Word, &c.
 (Ep. ad Pol. Tom. ult. P. 687.)

Luther, to mention here no more, like-
 wise saith. ‘ The Word *Trinity* is an Human
 ‘ Invention. It were better to call Almight-
 ‘ y God, *God*, than *Trinity*. (Postil. major.
Dominic.)

Howbeit, it sufficeth here to have ob-
 serv’d, That the *Trinitarian Terms* and Ex-
 pressions, which cause the Separation of the
 Unitarians, are not scriptural, and cannot be
 thought absolutely necessary. What is next to
 be consider’d, is this.

(2.) The said *Terms* are very improper, and
 do intangle and obscure, rather than illustrate,
 the Doctrines that are intended and express’d
 thereby. That they are improper, the gene-
 rality of the Orthodox do own. And indeed
 who can deny it? Or who can think it very
 proper, to call God, (who is the most simple
 or most one Being) *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy*
Ghost (proceeding from both the former,)
 upon the account of his Properties, *Under-*
standing, *Wisdom*, *Will*; or to say that God
 is incarnate in a personal and hypostatical
 Union, because God, by his Divine *Wisdom*,
 doth most eminently dwell in, and most ex-
 traordinarily and constantly illuminate, con-
 duct and assist the Man Jesus Christ?

And now, that the *Terms* do obscure, ra-
 ther than illustrate, the Doctrines that are
 intended thereby, Experience doth confirm
 and demonstrate; for if you ask of a thou-
 sand among the People who daily use these
 Expressions, it will be found that not one of
 them ever conceiv’d, that, for instance, by
God the Father is meant *God as particularly*
distinguish’d by the Property of Divine Under-
standing, &c. But by these *Terms*, *Trinity*,

three Persons, *Incarnation*, and the like, the
 generality of People, that daily use them,
 either do not imagine and cannot at all
 perceive what is meant thereby, or they
 frame to themselves quite other Ideas there-
 of than they should; and, even to them,
 often, those Ideas appear most gross, and
 strange, and inconsistent with the clearest
 Suggestions of reason. If you should tell
 them that when we call upon the *Son of*
David, our meaning is to invoke *God who*
dwelleth in and illuminates the Son of David;
 would they not truly reply, that, that is
 more than ever they thought of or were
 aware, and that if this be the meaning of
 that Orthodox Expression, the said Expres-
 sion must be own’d to be very uncouth and
 obscure? Why therefore should we not
 express our selves more properly and more
 clearly, and plainly call upon *God who dwel-*
leth in and illuminates the Son of David, and
 content our selves to assert that in God
 there is a Divine Understanding, Wisdom, and
 Will, without further intangling that Doc-
 trine, or obliging any, in solemn and reli-
 gious Worship, to call God, upon the ac-
 count of these Properties, *God the Father*,
God the Son, and *God the Holy Ghost*, *three*
Persons, *Trinity*? &c.

(3.) The said *Terms* occasion many need-
 less and unedifying Speculations. There is no-
 thing more simple, or plain and intelligible,
 than this; that there is in God a Divine
 Understanding, a Divine Wisdom, and a
 Divine Will. These few words sufficiently
 comprize and illustrate all that need to be
 said concerning that matter. But if there
 was occasion for a further explication there-
 of, however, certainly, as was observ’d, it
 was not necessary to call God thereupon
three Persons, or to use any unscriptural or
 obscure and litigious Terms, which occasion
 no less litigious and unedifying Speculations.
 To what purpose is it, as to any of the Ends
 of Religion, nicely to inquire what Rela-
 tions may be consider’d among the Divine
 Properties, wherein or how far they differ
 from the Divine Essence, in what respect
 they may be call’d Persons, whether the
 Divine Persons are constituted by Relations,
 and

and in what manner, and the like? Yet such Speculations as these are rank'd in the highest place in some Mens Theology, and take up the greatest part of their time, which actually diverts them from making more necessary Observations. They are not solicitous to discover the literal sense of Scripture, or to inform themselves and others what *ceasing from Sin* or what *habit of Vertue* is requir'd by the Gospel, and whether there be no *Necessity to seek the Lord betimes*: but nominal Questions and frivolous Speculations they give up themselves to, and they make a great bustle about them, and for such things they are ready to brawl and quarrel. There can be nothing more unreasonable, and particularly in this case, when no more is meant by the Patrons of the unscriptural and obscure and litigious Terms, than by the Unitarians. Howbeit, it is an endless work to follow them in the curious Speculations they build on these Terms. They content not themselves to call God, consider'd with his essential Properties, three Persons. Many differ and dispute about the Characters, and Order and Preheminences of these Persons. Some assert, that the triple Distinction in God is by *Life, Intellect, and Will*; so that God is three Persons, as he is *living, intelligent, and willing*. Others affirm, that *Life* is not a distinct Power or Faculty, but as it were the Genus and Foundation of the other Faculties. And some of the Antients, and Moderns also, have held, that the Character of the first Person is *Power*; therefore their Trinity is God, as *Almighty, self-knowing, and self-loving*. But others make *Power* to be the Character of the third Person. Some Fathers of the middle Ages, and some Scholastics that immediately follow'd them, insist only on *Power, Wisdom, and Goodness*.

They all call these Divine Properties not only Characters, but *Relations*, which they affirm (both) to differ from one another, and yet to be but the same Divine Essence, or not to differ from the Divine Essence but only in our way of conceiving, a Relation in the Divine Nature being distinguish'd from

the Divine Essence only by an Act of Reason.

Thus they assert, that the Divine Principles are radically one, as they are the Essence; but that virtually, connotatively, and relatively to the Acts, they are three. And taking them to be *Life, Intellect, and Will*, they after this manner explain that Doctrine, in St. Athanasius his Terms. 'The Catholic Faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Principles, nor dividing the Substance; for the vital-Power is one, the Intellective another, the Volitive another: But the Deity of the Life, of the Intellect, and Will, is the same; the Glory equal, &c.

These three they conceive to exist one within another, *circum-inseparably*, if it may be so said. They assert, that the Persons are not distinguish'd by themselves, as the ultimate Differences, but by *Personal Properties*; and they deny that they are constituted by *Absolutes*, not because it is without probable Reasons, but because it is deny'd by the Fathers, and seems contrary to the Councils, and the generality of the School-Doctors. Then they conclude that Relation under the express Form of Relation doth constitute a Divine Person, in its real Being, without any Act of the Mind, &c. Some as wisely as piously inquire, *An Deus possit suppositare Asinum aut Cucurbitam*: To which Question the Answer is, *Respondeo quod sic*. A thousand more such (subtile) Speculations there are equally necessary and edifying; but, I conceive, no more of these need here to be added.

(4.) The said Terms are the Cause of much (unreasonable) heat, and (unchristian) uncharitableness. If upon the account of these Expressions and Terms, the Orthodox fall out with the Unitarians; it is palpable that there can be nothing more unchristian and unreasonable. For the Unitarians do not deny any of the Divine Properties; and they firmly believe that God most extraordinarily assists, with his Divine Wisdom, the Lord Jesus Christ. And this last is, summarily, as we have seen, what the Orthodox understand by the Incarnation, as by the Trinity they

they mean God's most essential *Properties*. So that visibly, the *Orthodox* and the *Unitarians* are agreed about the *thing*, as has been shewn; the difference being only about some *Expressions*: and therefore, as concerning the *Doctrines* themselves, the *Unitarians* are as truly *Orthodox* as those, that appropriate the Title to themselves, and that find fault with the *Unitarians*, on the account that the *Unitarians*, in speaking of *God* and *Christ*, would stick to the *Expressions* and *Terms* of *Scripture*. Now to say, that to do so is a *Heresy*, and a *damnable Heresy*, is it self, in any Man, a damnable piece of Inconsideration. And then surely for those who by the *Trinity* and *Incarnation* understand, and are convinc'd that by these *Doctrines* is to be understood what we have seen the *Unitarians* do allow of; for them, I say, to render the *Unitarians* odious, and assert that they are *Heretics*, (if any such Persons do so) must needs be a most sinful Diffimulation.

The difference betwixt the *Unitarians* and *Trinitarians* being (as is represented by this System) only a *difference of Words*; the *Unitarians* may with some reason complain of the *Trinitarians*, for departing from the *scriptural* simplicity, but the *Trinitarians* have not the least shadow of ground to quarrel with the *Unitarians*. Yet the *Trinitarians* generally declaim against and revile the *Unitarians*, as if they were the *Enemies* of, and as if they destroy'd the *Christian Religion*; and they abhor and persecute them, and set every body against them, as if they were the most abominable of all *Creatures*.

Now what is the occasion of all this unreasonable stir, and of this damnable Uncharitableness? Why, the *Unitarians* hold, that *Divine Understanding*, *Wisdom*, and *Will* are *Divine Properties*; that it is sufficient so to term them, that there is no reason or necessity upon the account thereof to call *God* *three Persons*, since the *Scripture* doth it not, &c. The *Trinitarians* reply, that *Understanding* is the *Cause* of *Wisdom*, and that *Understanding* and *Wisdom* produce the *Will*, that *God* may be

particularly and distinctly consider'd with respect to each of these three *Properties*, that being thus to be thrice consider'd he is *three Persons* according to the original signification of the Word *Person*, that (since the first *Property* is the cause of the second, and the third proceeds from the two former) the first *Person* is to be call'd the *Father*, the second the *Son*, the third the *Spirit* that proceeds from the *Father* and *Son*, &c. This is the utmost of the difference, that can here be suppos'd.

It is then as if some speculative Divines call'd Faith the Mother of *Christian Virtues*, Hope the Daughter of Faith, and Charity the Grand-Daughter, and would oblige all *Christians*, under pain of *Excommunication*, to make use of these *Terms* in their *Devotions*, and to ask of *God*, that he would bestow upon us not only the Mother, but also her Daughter and Grand-Daughter. If any were so scrupulous as not to approve of such *Expressions* in solemn *Addresses* to *God*, would it be agreeable to *Christianity*, to hate them upon that account, and endeavor to render them odious to all the *World*, to represent them as the *Grand Enemies* of all *Truth* and *Religion*, to exclude them from our *Communion*, and to oppress and persecute them? This would certainly be to expose *Christians* to the hatred and contempt of the rest of *Men*; for visibly it were to usurp and exercise a tyrannical *Dominion* over the *Consciences* of our *Brethren*. For the same reason then, the *Unitarians* ought not to be excluded from us. And it must needs be very unreasonable and uncharitable (as has been shewn) to insist with Heat and Passion on any *unscriptural Expressions*, which others do scruple at.

(5.) The said *Terms* cause *Heathens*, *Jews*, and *Turks*, and many *Christians* to think, that *Christians* believe and are taught to believe *three Gods*. The wisest among the *Heathens* have often on this account retorted upon *Christians* the Accusation of *Polytheism*, or of holding more *Gods* than One. And the generality of the *Jews* and *Mahometans* do abhor the *Christian Religion*, chiefly

chiefly because they conceive that we hold three Gods, that only agree in kind, or that are of the same Nature. Naturally the vulgar among Christians can scarcely take the Orthodox Expressions in any other sense. And why should not they so understand the said Expressions and Terms, when they are so understood even by some of the most famous Doctors, and of the most eminent Fathers? *Gregory Nyssen*, for instance, in some Places of his Works, *Cyril of Alexandria*, *Maximus the Martyr*, *Theodorus Abucara*, *Theorianus*, held only a Specific Unity of Nature between the Divine Persons; such as between *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, whom they would not therefore have to be call'd three Men, but one, because they are of the same Species; lest otherwise they should be oblig'd also, on their Principles, expressly to confess three Gods, which they would not do verbally, tho three Divine Persons, properly so call'd, united only as they are of the same Nature, cannot be deny'd to be truly and really as much three Gods, as three Men are three Men. See *Petavius*, *de Trinitate*, lib. 4. c. 9.

It must be own'd, that many of the Orthodox Expressions look that way, and in their most obvious sense seem to imply a Plurality of Gods. As *Mr. Nye* observes, in his *Institutions concerning the Trinity*, (p. 195.) the Terms *Persons*, *Father*, *Son*, *Spirit*, and the like, in the Language of the People, imply so many distinct actual Beings, and are always so understood by them. When we say, in the *Athanasian Creed*, *There is one Person of the Father, another of the Son*, &c. or in the *Nicene Creed*, *God of God, who came down from Heaven, and was incarnate*, &c. in the *Doxologies*, *To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost*, &c. and in the *Invocations*, *O God the Father, O God the Son*, &c. The People can naturally frame to themselves no other Ideas, but of such several Divine Persons, as agree in one, only as they are of the same Nature and hold a good correspondency one with another, which indeed is the Notion of a Plurality of Gods, which we have seen was held by some of the Fathers.

The incommodiousness therefore of the Orthodox Expressions has caus'd many of the most learned of the Orthodox Party to think, that they were not fit for common use, that they were better laid aside, and that it were safer to stick to the Expressions of Scripture.

Forbesius asserts, ' That it is not a proper manner of Worship, when the three Divine Persons are severally ador'd, by distinct Invocations; because thereby we seem to make a Separation in the Object of religious Worship, which is most strictly one.— *Franciscus à Sancta Clara*, and generally the Doctors of the Church, deny that the Divine Persons, as Persons, are the Objects of Divine Worship. *J. Forbes*. *Instruction. Historico-Theologic. Lib. 1. c. 23.*

Luther saith, ' The Word *Trinity*, sounds oddly, and is an Human Invention. It were better to call Almighty God, *God*, than *Trinity*. *Posit. major. Dominic.*

Calvin is much warmer. ' The Word *Trinity*, says he, is insipid and prophane; it is the Popish God, unknown to the Prophets and Apostles. *Epist. quâ fidem admonitionis confirmat. ad Polonos. Tom. ult. P. 687.*

(6.) The said Terms are a Stone of stumbling, in the way of those who truly believe the Gospel to be a Divine Revelation; and they are an occasion of Separation. *St. Jerom* himself, in a Letter to *Pope Damasus*, declares that he will not make use of the Word *Persons*: which Word even *St. Austin* owns to be very improper. *Dictum est tamen tres Personæ, non ut illud diceretur, sed ne taceretur. De Trin. l. 5. c. 9.* Why then should it be thought strange, if many tender Consciences scruple to use such like unscriptural Terms in the solemn Worship of God? Now surely it is very much contrary to Charity, to leave a stumbling-block in the way, or an occasion of Separation.

(7.) A better Provision would be made for the Truth (and incontestably every Man's Right of discerning, and judging for himself would be better secur'd) by the disuse of the said Terms and Expressions, than by their
B being

being impos'd. As for the securing to every Man his Right of discerning and judging for himself, it is plain and incontestable that, that cannot so effectually be done, but by sticking to the scriptural Terms. And it is undoubted that that cannot be a justifiable means of conveying or promoting the Truth, which is contrary to and destructive of Right and Equity. But, moreover, it is even evident that the Truth in general, and particularly the Truth in question, is better secur'd by *scriptural* than by *unscriptural* Expressions and Terms. Otherwise we must say, (far be the blasphemy) that the Holy Ghost, that dictated the Scripture, was not so willing or not so able to secure the Truth, so far as is fit, as Men. But after all (according to this System of the *Modalists*) what Truth is here to be secur'd, but what is not only compriz'd in the *Words of Scripture*, but also granted and profess'd by the *Unitarians*, I mean as to the *Doctrines themselves* of the *Trinity* and *Incarnation*? The Scripture then ought by all means to be look'd upon as a *perfect* and *sufficient* Rule; and if any absolutely necessary part of the Gospel is hid to those that have the free use of Scripture, it is only to them who wilfully perish. The Scripture will never of it self lead any Man to any *Tritheistic* Notions, or to the belief of a Plurality of Gods. But we have seen, that the unscriptural (Orthodox) Expressions do naturally present such wrong and most dangerous Ideas. As for those who better understand the said Expressions, they may indeed, if they very carefully attend thereupon, put a sound sense on them, doing them much violence, and not taking them in the ordinary signification of the Words, or according to the most obvious Ideas which they naturally offer to us. But it is very difficult to be always so intent. And by the use of the like unscriptural Terms, such a spiritual Tyranny and Oppression may be introduc'd as enslave and may wound to Death the Consciences of Men, and may be destructive of the Truth. The *Modalists* therefore, according to this, are evidently and absolutely inexcusable, in retaining the Use of

unscriptural Expressions. (By the *Modalists* every one knows those are meant, whose System we have been considering, who take the Doctrine of the *Trinity* to imply three *Modes* of Existence, according to which God may be consider'd, with respect to his Divine Understanding, his Divine Wisdom, and his Divine Will.) The natural Result, and the necessary Consequences of this System, are plainly those that we have now represented and enlarg'd upon. Whosoever doth consider, cannot but make upon the whole, the Observations that we have here made: So that, according to this System, those who can do any thing towards the taking away the public Use of the unscriptural Terms, are indispensably oblig'd to do it. Indeed in *Articles of Peace*, which Clergymen are to subscribe for Order-sake, Scholastic, Metaphysical and Learned Terms may be allow'd to be us'd, when the said Terms, if rightly consider'd, actually agree with the Latitude of the Scripture it self, as by this System of the *Modalists* the Orthodox Terms are suppos'd to do. But, from this said System, it certainly follows, that tho these Terms and Expressions may (by learned Men, who can dive into all the senses possible, and so are able to put a tolerable Construction thereupon) be taken in a Latitude agreeable to that of Scripture; yet the use of them ought not to be impos'd or exacted, in the *Divine Worship* and solemn Addresses to God, for the *seven Reasons* that have been alledg'd and spoken to. These *Reasons* and the natural Consequences of this System necessarily imply, that those that are instrumental in imposing the said Terms, are guilty of *spiritual Tyranny* and *Schism*.

It doth not follow indeed, as has been observ'd, that Men are *indispensably* oblig'd to *divide* upon the account of these Terms. The Result of what has been said only is, that those that can do any thing to take away the use thereof, are oblig'd to do it; but, on the other hand, it is consistent with this System, that in the mean time, those who can take these Terms and Expressions in a good sense, and find they can use them with

with Devotion, may for Peace and Union sake, assent to and comply with them; for it seems that whatsoever admits of a good Construction, tho otherwise incommodious, may conscientiously be submitted to, in such circumstances, for Peace and Union sake, when it is not thro our fault that such incommodious Terms are impos'd, and we, on our part, meekly represent the incommodiousness of them, and with Prudence and Discretion do what we can that the Danger of such an Imposition be discerned. In such a case then, instead of dividing, it is necessary to exhort all Parties to Union, as well as to endeavour conscientiously to accommodate our selves to the impos'd Terms, and study in what good sense they may be taken and us'd with Devotion and Reverence. Yet after all, those that are persuaded of the incommodiousness of these Terms, are not to seek to accommodate themselves to them, or to affect the use of them, more than needs must. For it is *Necessity* only that justifies their compliance; but it doth not allow them to betray that which (when they sincerely consider and examine) they take to be the Truth. On the contrary, if they seek their own particular profit by such a compliance, and not the manifesting and promoting the Truth as much as possible; their Condescension is undoubtedly damnable.

I humbly conceive, that what has been said is a compleat Consideration of the Sentiment and System of the *Modalists*, who by the *Damnatory Clauses*, in the *Athanasian Creed*, denounce *Damnation* against them only, who deny those plain and incontestable Truths, which may be understood by the Doctrines of the *Trinity* and *Incarnation*, and which are most evidently agreeable to the natural notion of the *Unity* of God.

To recapitulate in short this System, I shall close this Chapter with some Passages, out of Mr. Nye's *Institutions concerning the Holy Trinity*, &c.

Preface. ' I should excuse the great number of Authors, and Authorities here, to the same thing, if I did not foresee that it is absolutely necessary for appealing

those, who will be so much surpriz'd that the *Faith* of the Church is so different from the vulgar meaning of the Terms in which she expresses it.

Instit. p. 1. ' To hold the Doctrines of the Trinity, and of our Saviour's Divinity, in the *Terms* only, without knowing the sense intended in those Terms; is to be no more positively *Orthodox*, in these Articles, than an *Ideot* is.

P. 8. *Persons, Father, Son, Holy Ghost*, in God, are not distinguish'd by distinct *Substances, Understandings, Wills, &c.* but are numerically one Substance, Understanding, Being, Spirit; they differ as a *Mind* and its *Acts*.

P. 24. There is one *Eternal Being*, in which we are to consider *Eternal Mind*, Divine *Self-Knowledg* generated by Mind, Divine *Self-Complacence* necessarily proceeding from both.

P. 25. Our *Saviour* is *God-Man*. *Man*, in respect of his reasonable Soul, and humane Body; *God*, in respect of the indwelling Divinity.

P. 26. Many think, and themselves [the *Socinians*] also for the most part, that they [the *Socinians*] have a great Controversy with the Catholick Church on these Articles; while in Truth the Dissent and Controversy (on both sides) is only from a misapprehension of one another's Sense and Meaning.

P. 28. There is no difference in the *Ideas* that the *Church* and the *Unitarians* have of the Unity of God.

P. 29. There is not the least Reason, for the Gentlemen of the *Unitarian* Persuasion, to divide from the Church.

P. 31. Because *Socinus* knew not what the Church intends by *Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, when she useth them of God; therefore he denied, there are three Persons of God, or three Divine Persons: And because he mistook what is meant by *Incarnation, Hypostatical Union*, and such-like, when he heard of them in Sermons; therefore he denied the Divinity of Our Saviour.

When he heard in the Church, of three Divine Persons, of Father, Son, and Spirit; of In-
carnation, Hypostatical-Union, and such like;
he took them, as 'tis to be fear'd the unlearn-
ed too commonly do now, in the familiar
and vulgar sense.

He imagin'd three such Persons, as three
Men, or three Angels are; that is to say,
Persons that are essentially distinct, and not
modally only.

P. 31. But no Catholick Writer ever
said, God is three Persons, in this sense of
three Persons. The Catholick Church ever
own'd that, in this respect God is but one
Person; she ever taught, he is but one intel-
ligent Essence: She declares it to be Heresy,
and Tritheism, to affirm three (infinite) in-
telligent Essences, she believes but one such
Essence; consequently that, in that regard
God is but one Person.

P. 53. The Divines of the Schools de-
scribe a Person in the Holy Trinity, to be
The Divine Essence, or Godhead, under a
particular (intellectual co-eternal) Mode
of existing. Of which Modes, they note,
there can be but three; original Intellect,
reflex Self-Knowledge, and the Love, or
Self-Complacence that proceeds from both.

I will only add, that if any take it ill,
that these things be represented, and hum-
bly offer'd to be consider'd, they (as much

as in them lieth) take away that Freedom
which the Principles of Protestants allow
and recommend, and which is necessary to
debate things, and to clear them, and to
demonstrate, or to attain with rational affu-
rance or certainty to the Truth; they intro-
duce a Spiritual Tyranny; they oppose the
Apostle's Injunction of examining all things,
for they actually shut up the Key of Know-
ledg, and will not have Men enjoy and use
the means of a fair Information; they act
partially, and as if they could not err, and
as if they were to judge magisterially and
definitively of Controversies; and being
fallible, (as certainly they are, and as they
own themselves to be, except they be the
Pope and a pretended general Council) they
rashly run the hazard of most mischievously
and criminally fighting against, and despe-
rately oppressing and crushing the Truth,
and rendring the Discovery and Acknow-
ledgment of it humanly impossible, or next
to impossible; they subvert the Gospel-
Terms of Communion; and in fine, taking
such Measures as are fit to eternize Error,
and to retain Men for ever in their Preju-
dices, Misunderstandings, and Animosities,
they are therefore, no doubt (whether or
no they otherwise err) in a State of Dam-
nation, and are most highly guilty before
God, most shamefully neglecting to reason
and consider.



FINIS.

